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THE PIONEER

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ARMY IN AUSTRALIA

Rev. Murray Harris,
National Director
Church Army in Australia.

Rev. John Capper,
Principal,
Church Army College of Evangelism.

THE NEW TEAM!

CHURCH ARMY IN AUSTRALIA

A Society Of Evangelists within the Anglican Church

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JUNE, 1989

Outside St Andrews Cathedral: Left to right: Lyn Box (Russell), Barbara Leatham (N.Z.), Wendy Woods (N.Z.), Len Taylor (N.Z.), Mark Rogers.

THE OTHER FERGIE

Whatever happened to Fergie?, our Fergie that is, Sister Wendy Ferguson, Church Army.

Well, like many of our Church Army Sisters, she married, and is now Sister Wendy Capper. Unlike some we've "lost" that way, she didn't marry a clergyman. That was to come later!—? and, praise the Lord, we didn't "lose" her!

During Wendy's first year of training at the Church Army College in 1977, her weekend parish work experience was at St. Columb's in West Ryde. There she met John Capper, the Youth Fellowship Leader. He was also studying at the University of N.S.W. and after gaining his degree, went on to be a Chemical Engineer at the Shell Co. After commissioning, Wendy's first field placement was at Tamworth in northern N.S.W. in parish work and at the Calrossy School. For the following three years, John was a regular weekend visitor, commuting between Sydney and Tamworth.

John and Wendy were married in 1981. A year later John entered Ridley Theological College in Melbourne to do three years study. Wendy was in parish work at All Saints' Northcote (Melbourne). She was also on the Archbishop's mission team, an exciting time of ministry which made use of her gifts in singing and the performing arts.

When John was ordained and priested, their next move was to the parish of Collarenebri in the Diocese of Armidale, N.S.W. for three years. Now the full circle is completed and Sister Wendy Capper has returned to the Church Army College where her husband John has been appointed the Principal.

"It's like coming home", Wendy told me, surrounded by her three children, Christy 4½, Naomi 3, and Miriam ("Mim") 16 months. There's a lot of changes, it's bigger, with twice as many students as in my day. There is a different maturity amongst the students; there's an emphasis on education rather than just training. They're given more freedom and show more self discipline.

Though Wendy sees herself first as the Principal's wife and a mother, she will be helping the students develop new skills in what she calls "arts in ministry". This will include music, drama and leading in worship. One of the goals for this year is to reach out into the community through street theatre.

Please pray for the Capper family as they settle into living and working at the Church Army College. Especially remember Wendy in the multi-faceted role God has led her into.

WAL SPENCER.

Wendy and John Capper

CAPPERS INTERVEW

Our interview began in the car as John was driving four-year-old Christy to pre-school. Then it was home to mind Naomi and Miriam while Wendy taught Music and Worship with the students.

John, how did you come to be the College Principal?

Well part of God's leading as I believe it was the opportunity given to Wendy to continue to exercise a ministry. We see ourselves as a team and being able to involve Wendy in the College programme confirmed our belief that it was right to be here. The parish we attend, St Stephen's, is also extending those same kinds of opportunities.

I heard that at one stage in your life you were described as "the Vicar's wife"!

That's right. I met Wendy when she was a Church Army Student at West Ryde and I was the Youth Fellowship Leader. A few years of geographical separation later, we married and went to Melbourne for my studies at Ridley College. During that time, we lived in the vicarage at Northcote in the absence of the vicar and because Wendy was the Parish Evangelist, I became known as "the Vicar's wife".

Was that a three-year course at Ridley?

It was three years of study but I managed somehow to complete the Bachelor of Theology and Diploma in Ministry within that time.

And I believe you're presently studying?

Yes, mainly Australian History as part of a Diploma of Social Science externally through the University of New England.

And from Melbourne to the parish of Collarenebri! It must have been a change coming to Sydney after three years in the bush. What have you noticed most?

We never had mildew in Collarenebri.

(The interview is temporarily suspended while John attends to Naomi and Miriam.)

Did you expect to be at Collarenebri for longer than three years?

Yes, we thought five or maybe even 10. When it was first mentioned that we think about the position here, we dismissed it. It's hard to explain the dynamics but it became fairly clear that the Lord was leading us here even though we were content to remain at "Collie". When interviewed by the Board, I tried to be myself as much as possible and they gave me the job . . . that could only be God!

Your background before studying theology was in chemical engineering. Has that experience proved valuable in your ministry now?

Well, I used to say that through familiarity with chemical equations, I got a good handle on the Greek alphabet. But I think it also taught me to think laterally. I guess I'm

WHO IS MURRAY HARRIS?

Murray and Ruth Harris

The question must have been asked by a number of you on my appointment to the Church Army. I am conscious that in most media interviews the interviewer manages to have the event say what he or she wants. Hoping that you will not see this as too autocratic, here is my chance to say something about myself, Ruth and our family.

As a young apprentice mechanic, I attended St Alban's Church, Claremont, Tasmania where we had the regular ministry of a Church Army officer studying at Christ College Hobart. It was often my privilege to provide transport for him on Sundays. After studying at Ridley College, I was ordained and appointed as the Assistant Curate of St Matthew's, New Norfolk, Tasmania. The Rector of the neighbouring parish was the Rev. Malcolm Little who was the Church Army Officer in my days at St Alban's. Malcolm eventually became the Rector at New Norfolk and I was inducted as Rector of Macquarie Plains.

Malcolm Little and I worked together in the Derwent Valley for six years. During that period, significant Church Army names like Buckingham, Polgen, Malcolm and Grimmett echoed in the hopfields of Macquarie Plains and timber towns like Maydena. I was always conscious of the impact the Church Army's ministry had made in that part of Tasmania. After the parish of Macquarie Plains, we had seven years at Deloraine and then God called us into Army Chaplaincy.

With the Australian Regular Army, we moved from Tasmania to Sydney, Townsville, Canberra and back to Sydney. During our time in Townsville, I had the privilege of meeting one of the Polgen brothers and, of course, Bishop Arthur Malcolm and Coleen. In October 1988, at the time that I was being considered for the job of National Director, my work in Army Chaplaincy took me to Adelaide and I was able to stay with Canon Malcolm Little at Balhannah. Naturally, we talked quite a bit about Church Army.

The job was formally offered to me. On the day that I replied, one of my daily reading scripture passages was 2 Tim. 4:1–5 which of course concludes *"... do the work of an evangelist fulfil your ministry"*.

Since that time I have read a great deal about Church Army. Possibly the most humbling thing for me personally was in PIONEER June 1988, page 14, where I read that members held a day of prayer and fasting for God's will to be done in the selection of the new Director and College Principal.

"... for where you go I will go, where you lodge I will lodge; your people will be my people, and your God my God ..." [Ruth 1:16]. These words spoken by Ruth to her mother-in-law are accurate of my wife Ruth's approach to our ministry. God has blessed her with many gifts which from time to time there has been opportunity to use. As a good listener with wise counsel and a gracious and loving heart for people, there are many who attest to her ministry. Having been brought up in the inner suburbs of Melbourne, Ruth has an understanding for those who live in these difficult inner city areas as well as a deep love for the sea, animals and nature in general.

We are the proud parents of three adult children; Dianne a Communications Consultant is overseas during 1989, Darren works as a Speech Pathologist in Hobart, and Wayne is studying in Melbourne for his degree in Business Administration.

As a family, we are conscious of becoming part of the Church Army family and we are very grateful for the welcome we have been given, particularly by everybody at Belrose. We do hope that we can meet with you sometime so please call in, introduce yourself and share in fellowship with us.

Please continue to pray for us. As the work of evangelism is front line work for the Gospel, then it follows that Satan will make major assaults on all who are called to be Evangelists in their personal lives and the lives of their families. We are all called to be prayerful and faithful with God's word as we proclaim to the world Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

1990

The first year of the decade is already promising to be exciting. All the Australia diocesan bishops have responded to my letter indicating their local interest in Evangelism.

We have five parishes offering new appointments for Church Army Officers for next year and we hope that others will call soon. There have been four enquiries about holding parish Missions and several indications of others.

Our Vision

We are committing ourselves to provide mission teams for at least one parish mission in each diocese in Australia in the first two years of the Decade of Evangelism. *24* Missions in *24* Months.

Our officers are ready and willing to be involved as mission evangelists who will bring to a parish a great deal of experience.

Prayer

The new Prayer Leaflet enclosed with this PIONEER is to encourage you to pray for us daily. Our officers value your prayers and personal concern.

Some basic questions arise:

1. What are you doing about EVANGELISM?
2. What is your parish doing about EVANGELISM?
3. Could your church benefit by having a few new Christians?
4. Are you *concerned* that many around you are not Christian?

TRIBUTE TO CANON ROY GRAY

Canon Roy Gray talks with Captain Gilbert Page at Church Army Conference at lane Cove, 1982.

Readers will be saddened to learn of the resignation of Canon Roy Gray from the Executive Board of the Church Army. We know that Roy's love for C.A. is as great as ever it was, but his good wife Dorothy with whom he resides at Nowra, has been very ill for some time.

Canon Roy Francis Gray became a member of the Board in April, 1975, and was, in January, 1976, elected Chairman of the Board, an office he held until 1981. In that year, he retired, by reason of age, from parish duties, and he did not seek re-election as Chairman. He continued, however, as a member of the Board.

Roy brought to the Church Army the same loving care, dedication and skill that he has shown in all his endeavours. He was born at Kempsey but gained admittance to Sydney Boys' High School—a competitive high school. There he was a member of the First Xl cricket team and the First XV rugby team. He served with the A.I.F. for five years in World War II and then entered Moore College. He was made a deacon in 1947 and an ordained priest in 1948. In 1952 he obtained his B.A. at the University of Sydney and played in the University First Grade cricket team. He has been the Rector of a number of parishes in the Sydney Diocese, Chaplain of Danebark School, Chaplain of lllawarra Grammar School, Hon. Chaplain at Wollongong Hospital, Hon. Chaplain to the N.S.W. Police Force, a Chaplain in the C.M.F., Hon. Chaplain to the N.S.W. Transport Department Apprenticeship College, Chaplain for Readers in the Wollongong Region and President of the N.S.W. Churches Cricket Association.

One can readily understand then, how the Reverend Canon's experience and ability proved so invaluable to Church Army. In all matters requiring attention by the Board, he played a leading role and his point of view which was always put forward in a humble quiet way almost invariably gained unanimous support.

To many people, Canon Roy Gray has been very much a St Peter figure—big, strong, enthusiastic, genial, a man among men, and yet filled with the same great love that Peter had for his Lord and the same burning desire to serve Him.

And so, once again we say, Thank you, Canon Gray.

Please remember Roy and his wife Dorothy in your prayers.

CHARLES CRITTLE.

Mr Crittle is a member of the Church Army Executive Board. A long time friend of Canon Gray, he first met him when he (Charles Crittle) was serving with the N.S.W. Police Force.

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